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[Thursday, Jan. 10, 2002]

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Superfund

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### EPA says listing on Superfund may not be necessary

By Chris Carroll  
Of The Post-Dispatch  
01/10/2002 06:12 AM

Herculaneum has not been added to the national list of sites eligible for federal cleanup money because Doe Run Co. is following orders to reduce lead pollution and remove contamination from its smelter, U.S. environmental officials said Wednesday.

House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-St. Louis County, asked EPA Administrator Christie Whitman on Tuesday to add Herculaneum to the federal cleanup list. His action was prompted by Herculaneum residents concerned that not enough is being done to protect their health. The city of 2,800 is 30 miles south of St. Louis and is home to the nation's largest lead smelter.

Missouri Gov. Bob Holden, whose approval for federal listing is needed, will tell the EPA that he supports the listing, said spokesman Jerry Nachtigal.

The designation would give the cleanup new urgency, said Herculaneum Alderman Leslie Warden, whose son was found to have lead poisoning in the 1980s.

It could also provide a safety net for residents if the cleanup is ineffective, she said. The Superfund listing would make possible federal buyouts of homes near the smelter.

"This could provide some security if the cleanup agreement goes south," Warden said. "This frees up some money to get these kids out of town."

The Superfund law was used in a buyout of dioxin-polluted Times Beach in the early 1980s.

Recent blood tests conducted on 62 of Herculaneum's 199 children ages 6 or younger showed that 24 percent met the federal standard for lead poisoning. Lead is a toxic metal especially harmful to the neurological development of young children and fetuses.

Doe Run has so far obeyed governmental cleanup orders, said Mike Sanderson, EPA Superfund division director.

"We would list a site if we felt we would not have a willing, viable party to do the cleanup," he

Cecilia,

fyi. history on  
Herculaneum

said.

Even if the site was placed on the Superfund list and federal money became available, the cleanup operation might not change if Doe Run continued to finance the cleanup, he said.

The current cleanup agreement involving Doe Run, the EPA and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources took effect in May. It requires the company to dig up and replace lead-laced soil and do more than \$10 million worth of smelter modifications, among other actions.

After high levels of lead contamination were found in homes and on city streets, the agencies moved to accelerate the cleanup. A new order with tighter deadlines was finalized in December.

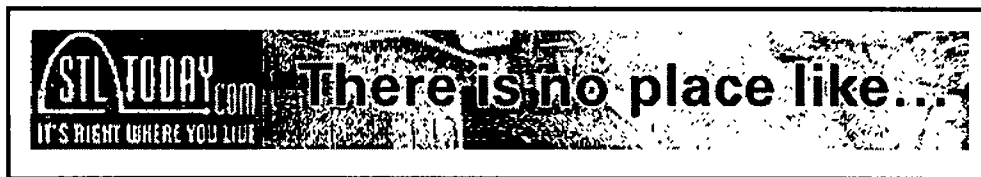
A Doe Run executive said the company opposed a Superfund designation because it had done all the government asked in terms of cleanup and taken some initiatives of its own, including a recent plan to buy high-efficiency filtering vacuum cleaners for hundreds of residents.

"We commend Congressman Gephardt and share his concern for the kids of Herculaneum; however, we believe the (Superfund listing) is not the right approach," said Barb Shepard, vice president of community relations. "We already are addressing the issues under our agreement with the EPA."

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